fortune teller. The purpose of this visit is to discover who would be a good adopting parent. The fortune teller advises the parents to select a person born under the same year sign as the child. These year signs roughly correspond to the signs of the zodiac. The twelve signs with their Japanese equivalents are: rat (ne), ox (ushi), tiger (tora), hare or rabbit (u), dragon (tatsu), snake (mi), horse (uma), sheep hitsuji), monkey (saru), bird (tori), dog (inu), and hog or boar (i). The year 1951 was the year of the hare; 1952 is the year of the dragon (tatsudoki).

The adopting or "growing up" parent is older, in multiples of 12, than the child. After consulting almanacs and other materials, the fortune teller advises the parents to find a person in the village born under the same year sign as the child. Prospective adopting parents are then sought out and the matter is discussed with them. Both parents may do this, but most often the discussions are carried on by the mother. When the selection is made, the child is "given" to the adopting parent, and there are prayers before the Buddhist god shelf in the home of the adopting parent.

Actually the child continues to live with its own parents, but makes frequent visits to the home of the adopting parent. There are no stated intervals at which these visits are made, except for New Years and O-Bon. The adopting parent may on these visits give food and presents to the child.

The arrangement thus seems to be a form of sponsorship and guardianship without special responsibilities on the part of the adopting parent, to bring good health and long life to the child. It has only slight resemblances to the godfather and godmother in Christian countries who sponsor a child at his baptism and theoretically at least undertake to be responsible for his Christian training. But the sponsorship and guardianship features are somewhat similar.

Adoption of this type may be done in Okinawa by either sex. Generally old women are the favorites and they may have many such adopted children. But old or older men may also assume this obligation. This form of "growing up" adoption existed in all the villages studied in substantially the same form.

8

The Household Order Naming System

Families in a village have, in addition to their own surnames, secondary names by which individual families are known. This secondary naming system is a device to distinguish related families with the same surname from one another.

The secondary naming system is known as "the household order," or yaro in Japanese. To introduce this discussion, it might be well to

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262 These crops do not exhaust their agriculture. Wheat and barley are grown, but not in significant quantities. Varieties of beans other than the soybean are important. Pumpkins and gourds of various kinds make valuable food supplements. The onion, the carrot, and the giant horse radish are grown for home use, occasionally for sale. More unusual products, such as the taro, are grown less frequently and then only for side dishes at meals.

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[177] In their agricultural work, farmers prefer the lunar (kyūreki, literally, old calendar) to the western, solar (seireki) calendar. The lunar calendar was abolished for official purposes by the Japanese in 1874. While this change was introduced into Okinawa, the lunar calendar still has vitality in the countryside. The present published calendars show with a large numeral the day in the western count, but in each block, in smaller script, is the corresponding lunar date:

JANUARY	1952
1	
12th Month	5th day

Births, deaths, official correspondence are recorded in the western count. The farmer, however, thinks in terms of the lunar calendar. When he says he plants his sweet potatoes in May, he means May by the lunar count.

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Western Solar and Lunar Day Equivalents

Western	1951, Year of the Hare	Lunar Count 1952, Year of the Dragon
Jan 1	Nov 24	Dec 5
Feb 1	Dec 25	Jan 6
Mar 1	Jan 24	Feb 6
Apr 1	Feb 25	Mar 7
May 1	Mar 26	Apr 8
Jun 1	Apr 27	May 9*
Jul 1	May 27	May 10*
Aug 1	Jun 29	Jun 11
Sept 1	Aug 1	Jul 12
Oct 1	Sep 1	Aug 13
Nov 1	Oct 3	Sep 14
Dec 1	Nov 3	Oct 15

* The period from May 24 to June 21, 1952, western calendar, corresponds to the lunar May 1 to May 29. The fifth month is then repeated beginning June 22 and ending July 21, western count. This intercalary month is necessary because the lunar year is about 355 days long. As a consequence about 11 days are lost each year, and an additional month is required every third year.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Some young farmers are now breaking away from the traditional lunar month and using the western calendar in describing their annual activities.[1]

The use of the lunar month is not confined to farmers. Fishermen, describing their work year, speak in terms of lunar months. For this reason, it is essential in talking to farmers or fishermen to establish at the outset what reckoning they are using. The names of the lunar month and the western month are identical. Following the Chinese, there are no distinctive names for the months. They are numbered from one to twelve. The months have to be distinguished by saying, for example, "sixth month, old calendar," or sixth month, Western calendar."

An interesting minor detail of agriculture and the timekeeping connected with it is the reliance of Okinawan farmers on Japanese almanacs. These are printed and may be purchased throughout the island. One of these printed almanacs is in almost every house, or is readily available from a neighbor. Often, if one asks what is planted or harvested in any particular month, the farmer reaches for his almanac and produces the desired information. If the inquirer is not careful, he will obtain not what a farmer does during the year but what the almanac says he does.

2

Methods and Tools

In the chapter on general geography, it was pointed out that, despite a high annual rainfall and precipitation every month of the year, there is a problem of water shortage and of drought. This is especially serious in the summer months in all three communities.

[Text Continues Top of P. 167--Analyst]

1 The 24 seasons, borrowed from the 24 Chinese solar terms, into which the lunar year is divided, are also retained on the modern calendar, largely for the use of farmers. For example, Shōkan (Little Cold) begins about Jan 6, Chūkei (Insects Awaken) on March 6, Bōshu (Grain in Ear) on June 5, Ritto (Beginning of Winter) on Nov. 7. These 24 seasons, in my experience, are not used much. Farmers think more in terms of the four seasons instead of the 24 little seasons. In Okinawa, they must be revised mentally to suit the humid subtropical climate. "Light snow," and "Heavy snow" are inapplicable in Okinawa; they would simply be small seasons in which one would expect the greatest severity of winter. For a list of the small seasons with Chinese characters, see The five thousand character dictionary, 5th ed., with additions and revisions by George D. Wilder and Chien Hsien Tseng. Peking, 1940, xxxi.

common and indispensable tool. It has many uses, including cutting rice stalks at harvest, brush, and sweet potato tops. 412

3. A small sharp pointed hoe, with a short handle, used in sweet potato planting.

4. A two pronged hoe, the futamata, used mostly with sweet potatoes. The two pronged hoe is used in softer soils. It is much more common in Matsuda than in the southern villages.

5. The three pronged hoe, the mutsumata, also used in sweet potato cultivation and in digging. These prongs, with skilful use, do not cut the potato. It is also much more common in Matsuda than in Hanashiro or Nagamo.

6. The common all purpose hoe (kuwa). It has a thick, solid, wide blade. The handle (about 3 1/2 feet long) is stout. The hoe is much sturdier than the ordinary American garden hoe.

7. Another hoe, longer and with a sharper angle between the handle and the blade. It has a variety of uses.

8. A long handled hoe with a heart shaped blade. It is used for making furrows.

9. An ordinary rake.

10. A cultivator and weeding tool for rice paddies. (The pole in back near the handle of the pitchfork is a prop to hold the tool upright for the picture). Only the more prosperous farmers possess this tool. Rice weeding is done almost entirely by hand. [934]

11. An ordinary pitchfork.

12. The plow (suki) 407

13. The harrow (maguwa), and

14. The waku, a hexagonal wooden frame used in laying out a rice field for transplanting. The last three tools or devices, which are not shown in the picture, will be described under rice cultivation. 413

3

The Annual Work Cycle

The following charts show the annual work cycle by lunar month of two farmers, one in Hanashiro, one in Matsuda. The Western calendar equivalents for 1951-52 are shown below the lunar month. Because the lunar year is shorter, there is a gap, as the period actually covered is from February 6, 1951 to January 26, 1952. These materials are based on observation and conversation with the farmers concerned. 221 241 [805] [114]

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

grandparents. The food was then served: noodles cooked with vegetables, with a slight fish flavor; rolls; tempura, a sort of fritter; a fish cake known as kamobuko with a red border symbolizing happiness, and plenty of sake (awamori). A streamer hung from the ceiling near the alcove, announcing the name and date of birth of the new born child, together with the written wish that she might live any number of 10,000 year periods. There are no special ceremonies on these occasions. Some guests drop in for a few minutes, others remain for the whole evening. The women and the children go home early, while the men continue talking and drinking. This celebration is the first of a series that continues through a person's life, and if his descendants are devoted, will end 33 years after his death. After this celebration, things settle down until the child's first birthday.

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At present a child's age is reckoned in the same way as the Western custom. A child is one year old one year after the date of his birth. This is a recent innovation in force since January 1, 1950. Formerly age was reckoned in the Chinese and Japanese manner. A child born during a year was one year old and on the following New Year became two years of age. Thus a child born on December 27 would be two on January 1. The difference between the Chinese-Japanese and the western reckoning is that the former counts the years during which a person lives with New Years as the date for increasing the age, the latter counts the number of one year periods in which a person has lived.

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The old system of reckoning age is inconvenient and conceals age differences. A one day difference might mean a year's difference in age in the case of a child born on December 31, and another on January 1. Determining the actual age of a person was troublesome. When children started to school, they might be 6, 7, or 8 years old and still be about the same actual age.

4

The Early Years

In all the villages studied, the women returned to their normal tasks about a month after childbirth. When the mother returns to the fields, the grandmother may accompany mother and child to the fields, the grandmother watching the child, while the mother nurses it at 10, 1, and 4. If the grandmother is too old and disabled, the child might stay home with the grandmother and the mother return from the fields to feed the child. Lacking help of this kind, the mother remains at home until the other children have returned from school.

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But arrangements of this sort need not last long, for very early in life the child is strapped on the back and carried around

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3

Daily Work Habits

512 The people of a village are continually busy. Their daily work habits depend on the season and the type of work. The work day of the fisherman is the least predictable because his activities are more sensitive to the present and anticipated weather. Most farmers continue working in their fields in a slight rain, but activity ceases with heavy rains. While the farmer works steadily and hard, there is a certain elasticity in his schedule. He does not go to the fields every morning at exactly the same time. Neither does he feel compelled to put in a full day's work every day; he is guided more by the tasks to be done. Work is interrupted by an occasional smoke or conversation with friends or neighbors passing by. There is a routine in daily life, but it is not strictly adhered to. Meal times vary from day to day sometimes by an hour. Time may be taken out from the fields to gather firewood, make bean curd, to dry out bean pods, or to fix up one's house. Three or four days in a row may be devoted to helping with another's house. The sun is the guide to time. Most houses have clocks but few are running and they are not well regulated. Perhaps the chief distinction between agriculture and fishing work is that in the former, the tasks of all blend together.

[264] [476] [805]

A farmer's work day in summer begins about 8 or 9 in the morning and ends almost the same time in the evening. Full advantage is taken of the daylight hours. In summer, the evening meal is not eaten until 9 and often later. By the time the meal is finished and the table cleared, it is ten. After short visits within the family, or with neighbors, the farmer retires about 11. In the winter, the routine is the same, but the day's work stops earlier, and the evening meal is at about 6 P.M. The fishermen do not have this unbroken routine. There is often night work and the day may be used for sleeping. Intense activity is followed by periods of greater or less leisure.

4

Clothing

125 293 565 [286] 291 [537] 000

The history of costume in Okinawa is full of interest, but it is too broad a subject to deal with here. In the old Okinawan kingdom, clothing and its color, hair pins, caps, and other articles of men's wear were used to designate rank. The clothing of the commoners had much less variety. Until quite recently, banana fibre was used in farmers' clothing. A dyed indigo kimono, stripes for men and dots for women, is still worn.

Present day clothing is of a non-descript character. The war

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discounting the idea that it was a sign of nervousness or of being ill at ease. Certainly it occurs equally with strangers, relatives and life-long friends, and it may well be nothing more than an extremely common mannerism. 157

12

The Tide

Scattered throughout the previous discussion there have been references to the importance of reckoning the tide on certain occasions. At these times, it is necessary that it either be high tide or that the tide is coming in. Though doubtless there are many more instances than have been mentioned, the following were found to be the most common occasions in which high tide or the beginning of flood tide was considered: (1) The marriage ceremony of san-san-kudo, (2) giving a child a name on its birth date, (3) when moving from a main house to a branch house, (4) when the child is given symbolic gifts at his first birthday party, (5) when carrying salt, the Buddhist god shelf and other articles into a new house. 823

Under these circumstances it is necessary to be able to compute the tide quickly and easily. For this purpose, the lunar month is divided into two periods of 15 days each. From an almanac a figure is obtained which gives the number of hours to be added to 12 o'clock on the first day of the 15 day lunar cycle. This is 0.8 hours or 48 minutes for low tide. (Everyone seems to have this at his finger tips). On the first day of the fifteen day cycle, low tide is 48 minutes after 12 o'clock. High tide is obtained by adding or subtracting 6 hours. The computation is shown in the following table. 805 823

Lunar Day at 12 o'clock (15 day cycle)		Multiplied by:	Equals Period of time in Hours to be Added to 12 o'clock.	Or, Low Tide at:
1	x	0.8 hrs	0.8 hrs.	12:48
2	x	0.8	1.6	1:36
3	x	0.8	2.4	2:24
4	x	0.8	3.2	3:12
5	x	0.8	4.0	4:00
6	x	0.8	4.8	4:48
7	x	0.8	5.6	5:36
8	x	0.8	6.4	6:24
9	x	0.8	7.2	7:12
10	x	0.8	8.0	8:00
11	x	0.8	8.8	8:48
12	x	0.8	9.6	9:36
13	x	0.8	10.4	10:24
14	x	0.8	11.2	11:12
15	x	0.8	12.0	12:00
16 (or 1)	x	0.8	12.8	12:48

To obtain high tide add or subtract 6 hours.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

1

The New Year

Two basic themes are expressed in public celebrations and holidays. The first of these is remembrance and respect for the dead. The holidays are in part public observances of basic obligations under the family system. In the second place, holidays are occasions of thanksgiving. In a year there are not many official holidays or rest days. The work year is not interrupted, as is our custom, with week ends which may provide from one to two days of leisure. Sunday is not a day of rest. Officials and school teachers do not work at their official duties on the week ends.

The traditional public holidays are based on the lunar calendar. In the discussion which follows, some holidays have been included, even though they involve only some of the people.

The western New Year is observed perfunctorily. It is observed only by present and former officials and honored elders of a township. The custom, about 40 years old in Gushichan-son, is known as New Year Banquet Party (Shinnenenkai). Headmen from each of the villages, members and former members of the village councils, and respected elders, the mayor and his subordinate officials and members of the township assembly are the chief participants. It is a social event, held in a public building or at a school, a "meeting for conversation" (hanashiai) at which food and sake are served. The event begins early in the afternoon and is generally over by early evening.

Lunar New Year (shōgatsu), the first day of the first lunar month and O-Bon in the seventh lunar month, are the two most important holidays. Lunar New Year falls in late January or early February. (In 1951 it was on February 6; in 1952, on January 27). This is a time of new beginnings, of thanksgiving, family reunions, and observances in honor of the dead. It is a three day holiday, with much prior preparation, and on the third day, there is either a symbolic or a partial return to work.

The new year is preceded by a series of activities on the last day of the 12th month (Ōmisoka). Before the war, these preparations were more elaborate than they are now. In Hinatogawa, bamboo and pine poles with a rice straw rope (shimenawa) hanging across the top were placed at the compound entrance. The purpose was to scare off evil spirits and devils. A piece of charcoal wrapped in sea weed and an orange hung from the rice rope. This custom now is also rare in Matsuda. Only one rice straw rope used for this purpose was observed, and this had been put up some time before the new year.

Other customs of preparing for the new beginning are still observed in all the villages: the house is cleaned; a bath is taken; old debts are paid; the New Year pig is slaughtered, or in the interests of economy three or four families may share a pig. The day before the New Year is the occasion for recalling one's bad deeds and of resolving on

not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap.

The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

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Chapter 2

Daily Routine

There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

an empty oxygen bottle with a wooden mallet to mark the time. The noon bell tells people in the fields and mountains that it is time for the midday meal and helps those who have a clock to compare the time. The evening bell indicates that it is time to end the day. Schoolchildren do not need a clock, since they get up early in the morning and go to school soon after, knowing that they are probably early. For most adults, daylight and sun position are enough to tell the approximate hour of the day. Some take arrival and departure of the bus, four times a day, as a point of orientation.

Old women are the first to rise in the morning. Long before dawn during the winter, or with the first light of the summer day, they get up and start a fire to boil sweet potatoes and heat the soybean soup. Blue smoke rising through the thatched roof into the early morning sky indicates that life in the village has begun. Children soon awake. The door is pushed open and a sleepy child appears to urinate off the edge of the house. Men are the last to rise. Considering the effect of the sake which they may have consumed on the preceding evening, it is remarkable that they are able to wake up so soon. By 6:30 the sleepiest person has risen.

The addition of outer clothes to the underclothing in which most people sleep is simple. Cold water splashed over the face and a quick turn at the toothbrush is all the toilet needed to begin a new day.

The task of folding comforters and taking down the mosquito net falls to one of the older children or to the mother. Older children and young girls help to carry water from the tank, the first task that has to be done after getting up. After breakfast, women feed the pigs. By about 7 o'clock everybody is ready for work. On a good day people leave for the mountains or start toward their fields—schoolchildren are on their way, too.

By 8 o'clock, except during very poor weather, the village is left to the old people and young children. Little boys and girls hang around, waiting for kindergarten to start at 9 o'clock. Play begins for them after they leave the house in the morning and does not end until evening.

For men and women, the routine of work in fields and forests is prescribed by seasonal activities which demand their special attention, but there are daily chores, such as digging potatoes, picking vegetables, and collecting feed for the animals and firewood for cooking. Only a few men who go to the mountains, taking their midday meal along, are away all day. The rest come and go during the day from the rice paddies, potato fields, or forests, so that there is repeated contact between children and their parents. A young child, even if left in the

It will be seen that for males membership in the common descent group is reckoned strictly patrilineally and this membership is permanent. The status of women is less clear. A woman before marriage worships at the ancestral tablets and tomb of her father's family and lineage. If she dies she is buried in his tomb. After her marriage a woman worships at her husband's tomb, where she will be buried, and if he is an eldest son she knows she will ultimately have the responsibility of preparing the offerings put before his family's tablets; but at the same time she continues to worship at the u-mmchii before the tablets at the main house of her father's group. She may be called upon to contribute to the fund raised by her father's group for ceremonial expenses. And she may even function as a kaninchu for it. A woman's own tablet, when she dies, will be placed with that of her husband. If a woman is widowed or divorced and marries again, she will very likely be buried in the tomb of the family of her first son, regardless of which husband was his father, and her tablet will be put in his house. A woman without sons may feel uncertain of her future.

It must also be made explicit that the Okinawan common descent group, unlike most unilateral descent groups, is not exogamous. Even cousins related through the male line may marry and it is said that in some communities they do so frequently. I found one cousin marriage within the kin group in Yamada koseki; Lebra found several marriages within the munchu at Kanegusuku. Informants said it was common in some communities.

2. The Life Cycle

The Calendar Before a description of the life cycle of the individual can be given, a word must be said about the systems the Okinawans use for reckoning time. Two systems are in use, the "old calendar" (in Japanese 'kyūreki') and the "new calendar" ('shinreki'). The first is the same ancient Chinese calendar that is used throughout East Asia; the second is the Western calendar.

The "old calendar" is essentially a lunar calendar but combined with the twelve lunar months is a system of twenty-four solar periods and a system of naming days and years by the "Ten Stems and Twelve Branches".[1] The lunar year consists of twelve lunar months, designated as "first month", "second month" and so on, of twenty-nine or thirty days, with the fifteenth or sixteenth of each month falling on the night of the full moon. Since the lunar year is about eleven days shorter than the solar year, an inter-calary month must be inserted every three years to hold the year in place, so that Lunar New Year's usually comes some time in February of the Western Calendar. The principal traditional holidays of the year, except for three, are figured in the lunar calendar. Of particular importance are New Year's (the first day of the first month) and U-bung or Shichigwachi (from the 13th to the 15th of the 7th month; the Japanese 'Bon').

[1] For tables, etc., see Papinot, 1910, Appendix XII.

805 177 The Chinese solar year is divided into twenty-four periods of about fifteen days each. All of them bear two-character names, "Spring Begins", "Rain Water", "Excited Insects", etc. This division of the year is based on solar phenomena, so that it remains relatively stable. A solar period therefore does not begin on the same lunar date every year. The three holidays [529] mentioned above that are calculated by the solar calendar rather than by the lunar are the spring and autumn equinoxes (Fiigang, in Japanese 'Higan') and Shiimii (in Japanese, 'Seimei'; the Chinese Ch'ing Ming, "Clear and Bright"; the period from April 5 to 20). Most farmers, however, do not seem to know even the names of the whole sequence of twenty-four; they merely look at their calendars to see when the important dates fall, much as we look to see when Easter will fall in any given year.

805 The Ten Stems and Twelve Branches (in Japanese 'Jikkan Jūnishi') make up a system of designating both days and years. The ten stems are ten characters named in pairs after the five elements---wood, fire, earth, metal, and water---each occurring twice, once in a senior aspect and once in a junior aspect (or in Chinese "Yang" and "Yin" aspects). The twelve branches are twelve characters named after twelve animals---rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog, boar. The two series run simultaneously, beginning "senior-wood rat", "junior-wood ox", and so on, so that after sixty days, or years, have elapsed, the cycle is complete and it is again "senior-[787] wood rat". On Okinawa the system is used by diviners (sanjinsoo, in J. 'ekisha') in drawing up horoscopes, but is probably not followed in its entirety by the layman. The twelve branches, however, are of interest to everyone. For many ritual purposes the individual is identified by the year of his birth within this cycle of twelve. A person praying may identify himself as a "rat man" or an "ox woman". The yuta, who are otherwise not concerned with calendrical lore, make it a point to ask the birth year of anyone about whom information is desired. An older person when asked his age may give it not in years but as "Year of the Horse," or the like, explaining which cycle only if questioned further. The term for the cycle is saa, so that a person may explain that he is chu-saa, "one cycle", above or below someone of the same [7X6] birth year. The twelve animals were even deified; there were twelve images of them scattered through four temples in Shuri. After the new year representatives of Shuri families made offerings before those corresponding to the birth years of all the members of their families.

Age, when it is reckoned in years, is traditionally reckoned not in full years since birth, as in the West, but in total number of years during which one has lived. Thus a child's years are one at birth, two after the following New Year's, three the next New Year's and so on. To know a person's age according to the Western system of reckoning one has to ask "how many full 805 years are you?" Thus what correspond to birthdays in the West are celebrated 527 on New Year's, when everyone simultaneously becomes a year older. The important ones are on the recurrence of the birth year, when one is thirteen, twenty-five, thirty-seven, and so forth, by year-count. These occasions are celebrated on the first occurrence of the corresponding day after the new year. Thus 1954 was the Year of the Horse and so people born during a Year of the Horse celebrated on the first Day of the Horse after New Year's. People are

warned to be careful on days corresponding to their birth-years. A man who was a "bird person" could not go to participate in a bone-washing because it was held on a Day of the Bird. During the recurrence of one's birth-year, he must be cautious during the whole period. 805 527

The Western calendar was introduced into Okinawa after the Japanese annexation, but it is still referred to as the "new calendar". It is the calendar of the schools and government and of business, but not of the farmer. In the city the more important celebration of New Year's is held on the "new" New Year's; in the country it is on "old" New Year's a month later. 805 177

Before the Japanese annexation years were named in an absolute sequence (that is, besides being named by position in the cycles of twelve and of sixty) by the reigns of Chinese emperors. After the annexation the reigns of Japanese emperors were used. At the present time the Western chronology ('seireki') is official, but some still speak of the year 1954 as "Shōwa 29", the 29th year of the reign of the present emperor.

Birth and Infancy: Notions about Conception Okinawans recognize that sexual relations are necessary for but do not always result in conception. Younger people have heard of the struggle of the sperm to reach the egg, but their notions may be rather foggy. For example, a woman in her middle thirties, discussing the responsibilities of parents, argued in the following manner: a woman cannot conceive without having an orgasm; she cannot have an orgasm without feeling love ('aijō'); hence conception is the result of love, hence she should willingly take responsibility for her child. The ethical principle involved in this argument may not be typical, but the lack of precise information of physiology probably is. And it suggests two things: first, that women may inhibit their emotions as a contraceptive measure, and second, they may be willing to take chances in having sex relations thinking that they can inhibit conception. But it is worth noting here that young women do not discuss these matters very freely and hence generalizations may be very unsafe. 842

Condoms are sold in the cities but probably not in the country. A former country woman living in the city believed that country people would use them if they knew of them, but that they do not know. She regarded four children as enough. However, a young unmarried man from the city said that one would use a condom only when visiting a prostitute; it would be insulting to use one with your sweetheart. Some of this attitude may carry over after marriage.

Pregnancy If a woman believes that she may be pregnant she goes to a midwife for a diagnosis. This is usually about three months after her last menstrual period. The fee is usually ¥50. If she is in fact pregnant she continues to consult the midwife and the midwife attends her at the birth of the child. The total fee is about ¥1,000. 843 [759]

For the good of her unborn child a pregnant woman is urged to be happy and to avoid situations potentially harmful to it; for example if she were to go to a funeral or a bone-washing the shii, a sort of soul, of the baby might be drawn into the tomb. [774]